

FIFTY YEARS OF SWINE BREEDING.

N. D. COBURN, OF KANSAS, WRITES THE FOLLOWING EXCELLENT ARTICLE FOR THE AMERICAN AGRICULTURIST.

Among the names by which farmers have known the Berkshire family or breeds of hogs common in various parts of the country were, Suffolk, Leicester, Berkshire, China, Mackay, Grassfed, Newberry White, No Bone, Grass, Chester White, Woburn, Chinese, Poland, Saddle, Redford, Coober, Illinois, Long-nosed Pike, Thin Kind, Calcutta, Byfield, Russia, Poland, Lincoln, Norfolk, Parkin, Medley, Yorkshire, and Razor-backed Aligator. Now, the names that furnish nine-tenths of the hogs slaughtered at the great packing centers are but two—the Poland-China and the Berkshire, both chiefly black, with white markings on face and feet. The former is an American-made breed, begun by the farmers in Warren and Butler counties, Ohio, thirty or more years ago, by combinations of the stock then known as Russia, Byfield, Illinois, Bedford and Irish Grazer, resulting in a large spotted stock of much reputation with the farmers of Western County hogs. These were later, liberally crossed with Berkshire blood, and from such foundation, by careful selection and mating, has come a breed that is now more widely popular and extensively raised in this country than any other. In November, 1892, a national meeting of swine breeders, held at Indianapolis, Ind., from a dozen different names, with which these have been known, chose that of Poland-China.

The Berkshire is an English breed, first imported to America about 1800. During the ten years ensuing, the demand for them amounted to a craze. The methods and conditions, then prevailing among American farmers, were such that the Berkshire was not favorable to the important breeds, and, after a few years, its popularity waned. For a quarter of a century, following, Berkshires were not wanted here, although in England their breeding and raising had been kept up. About 1855, the old prejudice against them had largely died out, and breeders in the United States and Canada began the importation of some of the best specimens British skill and experience had produced. Importations continued, they became widely distributed, and improvement was constantly made, and now their stock, either pure, or as a cross, is popular, and largely used in every State. Single specimens for breeding were sold for higher prices than those of any other breed, and the judicious crossing with a somewhat coarser Poland-China, which has been most resorted to, is regarded by many excellent judges as producing animals superior, for general breeding and pork making, to these or any others purely bred.

White hogs in any considerable numbers have well-nigh ceased to be reared in the great central basin of the country. Next to Poland-Chinas, Berkshires and their crosses, the swine best known are the Chester Whites. This breed had its origin in the use of stock brought from Bedfordshire, England, in 1815, upon the best of that at the time raised in Chester county, Pennsylvania. From 1860 to 1875 they were widely distributed from there in many States, and were more generally raised and crossed from than any other improved breed. Hogs, other than white, were quite rare at that time, many people not understanding that the meat of a black hog was in some way less wholesome than that of a white one. Now, a day's journey in the great corn States, night not reveal a Chester White or a herd of any white hogs.

Other breeds that have been given more or less prominence in the last fifty years are Suffolks; large and small Yorkshires (white); Essex (wholly black); and English, Victoria's of two entirely different foundations; and Cheshire, a white breed of American origin; Jersey Reds or Duro-Jerseys, a rusty red variety of large size and uncertain beginning, but quite a favorite with farmers in New Jersey. All these last mentioned have furnished individuals of undoubted excellence, and all have been in the direction of improvement, but, as a whole, their influence and impress upon the swine stock of America, while by no means to be despised or ignored, has not been so great as that of the Chester Whites. Essex, Duro-Jerseys, Small Yorkshires, and Cheshires. In their numerous volumes are recorded the pedigrees of thousands of animals used, or being used, for the propagation and improvement of the respective breeds. English breeders used the methods of Americans, and have already furnished several volumes of records for their Berkshire and other pure breeds.

In one especially important feature, it cannot be said there has been any remarkable improvement in fifty years. This is the almost exclusive use of growing Indian corn for fattening pork, though every man who ever examined the subject concedes that corn alone is not a complete or well-balanced ration for growth or health. In earlier days when the country was new and much of it heavily timbered "moss" was an important factor in pork-making. It is doubtful, if even in these enlightened days, the abundant grasses and clovers are regarded with the same intelligent appreciation in the art of pork production. The error of this violation of Nature's laws has been repeatedly demonstrated in the destruction, almost annual, of entire herds, on thousands of farms, by contagious diseases, called the conventional title of "cholera." The ability to wholly prevent losses by disease is perhaps not to be expected, but it is surely not ungeneral to believe that a more general use of green food, roots, other grains, clean water, and comfortable quarters, as adjuncts, with corn as the staple diet, will give to the American hog more robust health, to his flesh increased wholeness; to his market, a constantly widening horizon, and to his enterprising proprietor and producer, enhanced prosperity in a purse and conscience.

At the Metropolitan Museum—Under the (a crusty old bachelor)—"There, that's the Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. She never got married." Artful Widow "No; but this is King Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived. He married a thousand times."—Truth.



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Everything but what he wanted. But what he wanted most he didn't get. When you think that a watch is one of the few things to give your boy that will last more than a year or two, you'll find it the best present after all. Only put it in a strong, handsome case. Of course only a Gold-filled Monarch is best.

Penrose Myers, 10 Balto. St., GETTYSBURG, PA. Nov. 23, 1895, 17

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The Hawks Nursery Co., Oct. 15, 1895, 16. ROCHESTER, N. Y. Stimulus for Holiday Gifts at Eckert's, 33 1/2

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DECEMBER FARM TALK. One reason why cattle will go out in the barn-yard during inclement weather and endure cold and dampness in preference to remaining inside is that the stalls are too dark and cheerless. This is the season of the year when the pig pen is a mass of filth and slop, and for the cold weather would give off an intolerable odor. Keep the pen well filled with earth and absorbent material, and give the pigs a dry bed, protected from storms. By making them comfortable less food will be required. Do not try to hatch chicks with hens in midwinter unless you are willing to devote time in caring for the broods. Hens cannot raise chicks in winter unless kept in a warm place. The corn crop is said to be overestimated and prices must advance. These are cheaper this year than ever before and many farmers will not put as large areas in potatoes next season. The proper course to pursue is to grow those crops that your neighbors are discarding, and secure a smaller supply of such next season. It is doubtful if any farmer ever had too much land in grass. It is a crop that may be sold as hay or sustain more stock in the winter. All grass farms improve, especially, as farmers who grow grass as a special crop are always careful to use fertilizers and save as much manure as possible. Instead of using medicine as regularly give the animals linseed oil, which is not harmful, but, on the contrary, is a nutritious food, which is beneficial in many respects, especially to cattle and horses. Windows of poultry houses should be placed on the south or southeast side, as the warmth of the sun will enter sooner in the morning. The interior of the poultry house should have plenty of light and warmth, in order to keep all portions dry and free from dampness. When sulphur is given to animals in winter it is liable to cause them to take cold, as it opens the pores of the skin. It is also liable to cause rheumatism if given during damp weather. A harvester and binder that is 11' 6" where snows can drift in on it and perhaps be soaked when the snow melts, will be in no condition for work when it is wanted in next summer. Such costly appliances as harvesters, threshers, fanning mills, tread powers, etc., will break any farmer who does not properly shelter them. Repairs on the farm make quite an item, and much of such work could be avoided. The field to plow under for corn is one that has been in clover this year, and especially if weeds are taking possession and killing out the clover, as cultivation of the corn crop will kill the weeds. If plowed in the fall or winter the soil will form an excellent seed bed for the corn and give it a good start. The prices of farm implements are low compared with the past. When prices of farm produce fall, implements must be sold at a small margin of profit owing to the farmers curtailing expenses in the several departments. If you don't think the best stock pork look around through your neighborhood and see if the best farmers don't keep the best stock. It is estimated that grain fed to sucking lambs designed for the butcher at early day pays at the rate of \$2 a bushel for corn anywhere in the Eastern and Middle States. Never rob an orchard is liable to be badly damaged, if not ruined, by the rabbits, if the trees are not protected in some way. In small orchards the best protection is corn stalks tied around the tree. These will last for two seasons. They will also prevent trees from blistering during the hot summer weather. Every fall we feel like speaking a word in favor of cut green hoo for poultry food. Some form of animal food is especially desirable for fowls that have had a run of the farm during the summer. When frost destroys insects, these birds are forced to a sudden change of diet—the natural food is taken away from them. The problem of supplying this food during the winter becomes a serious one.—Rural New Yorker.

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